

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-7. Cancelled

8. (New) A method for removing protein from a chitosan composition and obtaining microcrystalline chitosan, the method comprising:

providing an acidic aqueous composition containing chitosan at $\geq 0.001\%$ by weight and dissolved protein at $\geq 0.001\%$ by weight;

adding a first aqueous basic solution to the aqueous composition to reach $6.0 \leq \text{pH} \leq 6.5$;

adding a second aqueous basic solution to the aqueous composition, wherein the concentration ratio of alkali in said first aqueous basic solution to said second aqueous basic solution is between 1:0.1 to 1:0.9;

precipitating microcrystalline chitosan from the aqueous composition having the dissolved protein; and

separating said precipitated microcrystalline chitosan from the aqueous composition having the dissolved protein to obtain a microcrystalline chitosan composition having protein at ≤ 10 ppm.

9. (New) A method according to claim 8, wherein said acidic aqueous composition containing chitosan and dissolved protein comprises an acid selected from the group consisting of hydrochloric acid, acetic acid, and lactic acid.

10. (New) A method according to claim 8, wherein at least one of the first aqueous basic solution or second aqueous basic solution includes a base selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, sodium carbonate, and potassium carbonate.

11. (New) A method according to claim 8, wherein said separating is carried out using a method selected from the group consisting of filtration, ultrafiltration, sedimentation, and centrifugation.